

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 186599

EXDIS

FOL REPEAT BOGOTA 7526 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO CARACAS

SAN JOSE AUG 22

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 7526

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR OAS CU VE CR CO

SUBJ: CUBAN SANCTIONS

REF: STATE 184049

1. PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF REFTEL THE FOREIGN MINISTER CALLED ME YESTERDAY, AUG 21, AND ASKED ME TO COME TO HIS OFFICE TODAY AT 5:00 PM. IN OUR MEETING THIS AFTERNOON THE MINISTER SAID THAT HE WANTED TO KEEP US FULLY INFORMED AS TO THE GOC THINKING AND PLANNING WITH REGARD TO THE CUBAN QUESTION. HE SAID THAT COLOMBIA HAD INVITED FOREIGN MINISTER FACIO TO COME TO BOGOTA EARLY NEXT WEEK. HE SAID FACIO WAS DUE TO ARRIVE MONDAY NIGHT, AUG 26, AND CONVERSATIONS WILL BE HELD AUG 27. WHAT THE FONMIN WISHES TO
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DISCUSS WITH FACIO IS THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE OF

INQUIRY WHICH WOULD LOOK INTO THE CUBAN SANCTIONS NOT ONLY, OR PRIMARILY, FROM THE THE STANDPOINT OF THE ORIGINAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT GAVE RISE TO THEM, BUT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF CHANGED WORLD CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE PRESENT SITUATION. THE COMMITTEE WOULD THEN MAKE ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE OAS AS TO THE CONVENIENCE OR INCONVENIENCE OF CONTINUING SANCTIONS.

2. THE MINISTER SAID THAT HE DEEPLY REGRETTED THE PANAMANIAN ACTION. HE AND PRESIDENT LOPEZ HAD REALLY THOUGH THAT FONMIN TACK HAD BEEN PERSUADED BY THE COLOMBIAN ARGUMENTS. NEVERTHELESS PRECISELY BECAUSE COLOMBIA WANTED TO AVOID CUBA'S SPLITTING THE HEMISPHERE AND KILLING THE OAS BY PUSHING FOR UNILATERAL RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS, COLOMBIA WANTED TO MOVE WITHIN THE OAS.

3. I THANKED THE MINISTER FOR HIS CANDOR AND INITIATIVE IN CONSULTING WITH US AND EXPRESSED BY GOVERNMENT'S APPRECIATION. I RELAYED BRIEFLY THE INFO IN PARA 2 OF REFTEL REGARDING THE LAST-MINUTE NATURE OF THE PANAMANIAN DECISION. I THEN SAID I ASSUMED THAT THE MINISTER WAS TALKING ABOUT A PLAN THAT WOULD BE ADOPTED IN AN OAS MEETING AND I ASKED WHAT TIMING HE WAS THINKING OF. THE MINISTER SAID THEY HAD MADE NO DECISION AS TO TIMING. THE PURPOSE OF HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH FACIO IS TO DECIDE ON THE NATURE OF THE PROCEDURE AND JUST WHAT IT SHOULD ENTAIL AND THEN THEY WOULD THINK ABOUT TIMING. I SAID TO HIM THAT AS HE KNEW THERE HAD BEEN AGREEMENT TO HAVE AN OAS MEETING NEAR THE END OF THE YEAR AND THAT WE STILL MUCH PREFERRED ADHERING TO THAT TIMETABLE. HE ASKED PRECISELY WHAT TIMING THAT MEANT AND I SAID WE WERE THINKING OF AN OAS MEETING TO INITIATE THE PROCESS IN THE LATTER PART OF NOVEMBER. I SAID WE KNEW OF COURSE THAT THE PANAMANIAN ACTION WOULD INCREASE PRESSURES FOR EARLIER OAS ACTION TO AVOID FURTHER UNILATERAL DANGERS.

4. THE MINISTER SAID HE WOULD KEEP ME INFORMED AS TO THE CONCLUSIONS THEY REACHED. HE SAID THAT THE CONVERSATION WITH FACIO COMPLEMENTED CONVERSATIONS HE HAD HAD WITH HIS COUNTERPART IN CARACAS AND HE REPEATED THAT THE DISCUSSIONS WERE STILL ABOUT WHAT AND HOW TO UNDERTAKE OAS ACTION AND THAT DECISIONS ON TIMING WOULD COME LATER. I SAID I WOULD REPORT ALL OF THIS TO MY GOVERNMENT AND THAT I WOULD CONVEY TO HIM ANY THOUGHTS WE HAD AS TO THE TIMING QUESTION. HE SAID HE WOULD TALK TO ME AFTER

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HIS MEETING WITH FACIO ON TUESDAY.

5. COMMENT. FIRST, I SHOULD AGAIN NOTE THAT THE GOC TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO CONSULT WITH ME BEFORE I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO INITIATE CONSULTATIONS AS PER REFTEL. SECONDLY, I SHOULD NOTE THAT IT IS CLEAR COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA AND COSTA RICA ARE PREPARING TO PUSH SOME OAS ACTION SOON. WHILE LIEVANO DID NOT INDICATE A TIMETABLE, HE SHOWED NO JOY AT MY EXPRESSION OF OUR PREFERENCE

FOR LATE NOVEMBER. I SHOULD ALSO NOTE THAT WHAT IS BEING DEVELOPED HERE IS NOT ONLY THE QUESTION OF WHEN TO MOVE BUT THE DETAILS OF THE PROCEDURE, I.E. WHAT WOULD A COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY LOOK AT, WHAT ARE THE GROUND RULES, ETC.

6. I SHARE AMBASSADOR MCCLINTOCK'S OPINION (CARACAS 7852) THAT WE ARE EXTREMELY UNLIKELY TO BE ABLE TO HOLD OFF ACTION UNTIL LATER IN THE YEAR AND THAT TO ATTEMPT TO DO SO WILL NOT ONLY IRRITATE BUT ERODE ANY GOODWILL WE MAY HAVE LEFT.

7. I WOULD LIKE AGAIN TO RECOMMEND THAT WE CONSIDER ACQUIESCING IN AN EARLY MOVE TO ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY IF THAT IS WHAT THEY WANT TO DO. IF WE DO SO WE WILL BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO CONTINUE CONSULTATIONS WITH THEM ON THE SUBSTANCE AND THUS MAXIMIZE OUR CAPACITY TO INFLUENCE THE KINDS OF RESOLUTIONS OR PROCEDURES PRESENTED BY THESE COUNTRIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF WE RIGIDLY TRY TO KEEP THEM FROM DOING ANYTHING NOW THEY WILL ONLY CONSULT AMONG THEMSELVES WITHOUT WANTING TO TALK TO US ABOUT THE SUBSTANCE.

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